

South River Bog

BY STEVE DONOVAN

CLIPPER CONTRIBUTOR

One of the lovelier short hikes in Duxbury is often ignored because it is found off a road not usually driven. The trailhead begins about twotenths of a mile on the right from the Route 3 North Street bridge overpass heading towards Marshfield. A sign there identifies the 100-acre South River Bog Conservation Land. The main trail runs east along an ancient bog access road cut deeply into the forested hills leading down to the South River. It first crosses a partially silted-in ditch once used to divert river water away from the summer drained bogs and then along a dam leading to the swiftly flowing South River passing through a still serviceable concrete spillway. The trail then continues along the dike, takes a sharp right turn and exits near the end of Duxborough Trail off Temple Street. If you are driving North on Rte. 3 you can glance to the right where the highway crosses the South River and see the old concrete spillway about a quarter mile downstream. There are two other trails leading off the main trail. The first one is on the left and slopes northeast to run along the downstream earthen dam to a partially destroyed spillway and wooden bridge before exiting at the end of South River Trail. South River Trail is assessable from Laurel Street via Tanglewood Trail and Deerpath Trail North.

The third trail runs beside the silted-in ditch from the main trail to the second trail. Just to the left of the intersection of the second and third trails is a foundation that once supported a bog house where cranberry boxes would be stored awaiting annual harvests.

There were originally four cranberry-producing bogs totaling four to five acres between the two dikes. In 1971, the year the town bought the property for conservation purposes, the four bogs had been allowed to go fallow for years and had reverted to the red maple swamp still existing today. In the spring Duxbury's swamps are alive with the songs of birds eagerly serenading prospective mates and the South River Bog is no exception. Bird trills against a background of rushing water provide unparalleled delight.

These bogs were once known as the Feinberg Bogs and were owned by Abraham S. Feinberg of Marshfield. He was a Justice of the Plymouth District Court who died in 1961. He bought them sometime between 1933 and 1938 and most likely hired a grower to take care of them. Judge Feinberg's father, an immigrant from Lithuania, was the owner of the Feinberg Department Stores, which were later run by Judge Feinberg's brothers and nephews. The stores closed around the 1990's. Conservation just completed a spring overhaul of the trails with the help of Harry Kelso, an Honors student at Duxbury High who is fulfilling his Honors Society obligation to work in community service. Trail maintenance is an important part of the Conservation Department's service to Duxbury residents and much of it is done with the help of volunteers.

A word of caution: tick season is beginning; any spray like Cutters or Off can help you avoid the perils of Lyme Disease. The wetter the spring, the more the ticks. If you would like to join a growing number of folks interested in occasionally helping with conservation chores like trail and waterway maintenance, herring counting, osprey platform erection and other interesting

work — not all of which is strenuous — you can email Steve Donovan at donovansteve568@gmail.com or call the Conservation Office at 781-934-1100, ext. 5470.



Conservation Conversation



Harry Kelso, an honors student at Duxbury High, is fulfilling his Honors Society obligation to work in community service by doing trail maintenance around Duxbury.